

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2008
7:30 PM**

Present: *School Committee Members*

<i>Denise Burns, Chair</i>	<i>Sue Sheffler</i>
<i>Joe Curran, Vice Chair</i>	<i>Ronald Spangler, Secretary</i>
<i>Joe Curro</i>	<i>Jeff Thielman</i>
<i>Leba Heigham</i>	

<i>Superintendent:</i>	<i>Nate Levenson</i>
<i>Asst. Superintendent:</i>	<i>Kathleen Bodie</i>
<i>Chief Financial Off:</i>	<i>Sue Mazzarella</i>
<i>Interim Sp. Ed. Dir:</i>	<i>Gerald Kupperschmidt</i>
<i>Student Rep</i>	<i>Callie McHugh</i>

Absent:

<i>Student Rep</i>	<i>Bobby McWatters</i>
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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

CONSENT AGENDA – *all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.*

**Approval of the minutes from Organizational Meeting April 8, 2008*

**Approval of minutes from School Committee Meeting April 8, 2008*

**Approval of Warrant #08140 dated April 8, 2008 in the amount of \$548,740.89*

**Approval of Warrant #08143 dated April 18, 2008 in the amount of \$326,994.77*

On a motion by Mr. Curro and seconded by Mr. Spangler it was voted to Approve the consent agenda with Ms. Sheffler amending the motion to pull the minutes out of the consent agenda and she will abstain from voting on the minutes due to being absent at those meetings.

Vote 6-0-1 with Ms. Sheffler abstaining

On a motion by Mr. Curran and seconded by Mr. Curro it was voted to approve the consent agenda and approve warrants #08140 and 08143.

Vote 7:0

AUTHORIZATION FOR PAYROLL WARRANT SIGNATURE

Ms. Burns entertained the motion to authorize Mr. Spangler authorization for Payroll Warrant signature due to the fact that Ms. Burns has family on the payroll with Mr. Curran seconded the motion.

Vote 6-0-1 Mr. Spangler abstained

RECOGNITION

Ms. Burns presented details from Mr. Dever on how the athletic teams are doing and was happy to report that both the baseball and softball teams are in second place in the GBL. Both lacrosse teams are currently in first place and both boys and girls tennis teams are undefeated. The boys volleyball won their first match and the boys track is 2-1 while the girls are still looking for their first win.

Ms. Burns also spoke on the after school programs supervised by Bob Bartholomew, Nina Martorana, Kevin Cumming who are certified in PE and First Aid. The theme Spring into Fitness is an award winning free program called "Best in Class" 5-2-1 offered to Ottoson Middle School students. The 5-2-1 stands for 5 fruits and vegetables daily, no more than 2 hours of screen time daily and 1 hour of exercise daily. The program offers a variety of activities.

NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Jerry Kupperschmidt, Interim Special Education Director, Ellette DiPietro, In-District Coordinator and Nancy Campbell, Out of District Coordinator spoke on the biggest challenge launching the new programs within Special Education Department would be need a paradigm shift in school and community attitude and understanding of special education and appropriately meeting the needs of all our children.

They spoke on the new programs within Arlington and noted we have welcomed back at least five students who were out of the district and expect three or four to return next year with the possibility of more students being placed in September. With time to continue to develop and give support to these programs the savings from keeping two to three students in district services vs. sending them out of district covers the costs.

USE OF DATA IN ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Kathleen Bodie, Assistant Superintendent of School presented on what has motivated standards based education and the high academic standards and expectations for all students. LeiLanie D'Agostino, Data Analyst/Curriculum Developer spoke on the many tools and the areas of focus to creating the ELL, Health, Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Middle School Reading and Intervention program databases. Ms. Frangos, Ms. Salomon, Ms. Janiak, Ms. DeRosa and Ms. Hanson all reported on their databases and how each is used differently, but provides each area with an understanding on student's performances and in some instances teacher's performances. Ms. Daley, 2nd Grade Stratton teacher presented her own data spoke on how its used to support students with the common assessments.

BRAINSTORMING ON QUESTIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS WANT

ANSWERED ON NEXT MEETING TOPICS: 1). Best Practices for academically able students presented by Wallis Reamer, 2) ELL update given by Jill McCarthy

Ms. Burns asked for all questions the committee had for the next meeting topics be forwarded to her by email, Ms. Burns, the chair of the committee, asked the superintendent as he prepares people to attend our meetings if he could remind them to answer the questions the committee has asked of them and the superintendent agreed to this.

In response, by Mr. Thielman noted that the committee is interested on the progress on the goal and that is the general purpose of the presentations. The chair updated the board and stressed the need for the committee to be addressing budget and policy issues. Ms. Burns then recognized Mr. Spangler with a motion to table this agenda item.

On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Mr. Curran it was voted to table this agenda item, due to the time.

Vote: 7:0

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

It was reported by Superintendent Levenson that Dr. Judy Malone Neville would be hired again for next school year at the Ottoson Middle School as Interim Principal. Also mentioned by Superintendent Levenson was the hiring of K-12 Director of Science, Michael Quinlan.

Ms. Heigham inquired on what steps the superintendent was taking to complete the May deadline for the Special Education State Report. Superintendent responded to the question raised that Mr. Kupperschmidt is putting together an action plan for the DOE covering all topics of concern.

The following motion was made by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Mr. Thielman.

WHEREAS: The School Department's bottom-line operating budget is set by Town Meeting, in accordance with Arlington's Five Year Fiscal Stability Plan; and

WHEREAS: That Plan caps annual growth in the School Department's total operating budget, including all Special Education costs, to no more than 4%; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee in 2005 voted to endorse that Plan; and

WHEREAS: Special Education represents a moral obligation of Arlington to its children, and represents what is largely a non-discretionary cost to Arlington under the laws of the Commonwealth and the federal government; and

WHEREAS: Special Education has seen actual cost growth averaging nearly 9% per year from 1998 through 2008; and

WHEREAS: The so-called O'Neil formula, which Town Meeting used to set the School Department's bottom-line operating budget for many years prior to 2005, made accommodation for the fact that growth in Special Education costs are largely non-discretionary; and

WHEREAS: The change away from the O'Neil formula has had the unintended consequence of squeezing the regular education budget as mandated Special Education costs have continued to grow well in excess of the 4% cap; and

WHEREAS: Ten registered voters have submitted a Warrant Article to the 2008 Annual Town Meeting which would increase the allowable annual growth in Special Education costs to 7% within the current Five Year Fiscal Stability Plan;

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESOLVES: To support the Board of Selectmen's recommended vote of No Action on Article 77 of the 2008 Annual Town Meeting, consistent with the 2005 School Committee vote endorsing the Stability Plan; however

WE FURTHER RESOLVE: That beginning in Fiscal Year 2011, under Arlington's next Fiscal Stability plan, some accommodation should be made for realistic growth rates in non-discretionary Special Education costs when fixing the School Department's bottom line operating budget. Accommodations could include treating Special Education costs as health insurance is treated today, allowing up to 7% annual growth in that budget line; and finally

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Approved May 13, 2008

WE RESOLVE: To continue to work to control growth in Special Education costs, while also continuing to meet our obligations to the children of Arlington who require these services.

Due to the fact the committee could not come to a consensus, and members were reluctant to endorse this motion, Mr. Spangler withdrew the motion.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Curran it was voted to move the 11 o'clock rule to 11:15 pm.

Vote 7:0

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

New Subcommittee assignments

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was voted to approve the subcommittee chairpersons and assignments as presented.

Vote 7:0

Policies and Procedures: Second Reading of Policy Dissemination, School Committee Legislative Program, Budget Transfer Authority, CJ: Administrative Intern Program, BIE: School Committee Member Insurance and BIA-E: New School Committee Member Orientation

On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Mr. Curran it was voted and approved to postpone the second reading of the above policy changes.

Vote 7:0

SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Spangler reported on correspondence received

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Thielman thanked members for attending Stand for Children and noted he had attending Day on the Hill, April 29th.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Mr. Curran and seconded by Mr. Spangler it was voted to Adjourn at 11:12 pm.

Vote 7:0

Submitted by

Karen Fitzgerald

Arlington School Committee

Administrative Assistant